Someone whispered nervously to a neighbor. One or two men lifted their heads and drew quick breaths. People [illegible]ed from side to side, and a few feet shuffled uneasily. Then a tiny puff of smoke came from the left wing and travelled as far as the middle of the stage. It was followed by a larger, rolling cloud. The effect was instantaneous.

"Fire!" shrieked a shrill voice, and a woman started up frantically. "Fire! Fire!"

In an instant the huge theatre was a seething, swaying mass; from all sides burst screams, sobs, and oaths. For a few seconds people were pushed in purposeless groups hither and thither. Then suddenly the crowd broke into rocking unwieldly sections, each pushing, fighting, tearing towards the nearest exit.

In the middle of the house, very still, sat a group of three. The Woman was in the middle, the Husband on her right, the Other Man on her left. For the first few seconds it seemed as if they must be swept off their seats. Then with a quick movement, the Other Man wheeled half round on his chair, put one hand on the back of the Woman's seat and the other on the seat before her. The Husband silently followed his example. They were both big, strong men. Their hands met in a steady grip behind and in front of her. Thus till the rush was [illegible] they formed a human cage for her protection, shunting off by their braced rigid frames, their crowding, frantic neighbors.

"Thank you," she said quitely, when the middle of the theatre was deserted. "I couldn't have borne to be touched by such—animals." She gave a hurried glance at the nearest mass of humanity and then fixed her eyes whimsically on the smoke-clouded stage in front. "What do they remind one of?" she asked as though thinking aloud.

It was the Other Man who answered. "Pigs," he said contemptuously; "pigs, when the trough has just been filled —crowding toward it."

She half turned her head towards [illegible] "Yes," she said gravely; "they [illegible] that."

[illegible] the fireproof curtain be[illegible]

"Oh, thank God!" shrieked a fashionably dressed woman, her face made [illegible] by fear.

[illegible] other faces, stamped with [illegible] of terror and ferocity, [illegible] towards the stage at the cry. [illegible] the tumult sank to some[illegible] like silence. Hope and thankfulness arose in a thousand breasts. Then [illegible] began again.

"Oh, it's stuck!"—and the [illegible] continued in all its [illegible] wardly savagery.

"[illegible] any chance!" asked the [illegible]

For a moment neither [illegible] then again it was the Other [illegible]

"[illegible] get the curtain down," he answered.

"[illegible] no other exits; I know [illegible]

It won't be the fire [illegible] —smoke. In a minute [illegible] move further back [illegible] spoke with admirable [illegible]

[illegible] suddenly the Husband [illegible] both turned towards [illegible] was gray, and his lips [illegible]

[illegible] this way," he murmured in a [illegible] "Ah, merciful heaven, [illegible] way!"

[illegible] quivered as beneath a [illegible] face became drawn.

"[illegible] she said sharply, "John!"

[illegible] started slightly. "Yes?"

[illegible] not let her eyes meet his. [illegible] go away," she said in a low [illegible]

[illegible] hesitated a moment. "What for?" [illegible] She stirred impatiently [illegible] don't care. Get a whisky- and[illegible] you know where to find it, or—[illegible] haps you'd better leave out the soda; I mean——" She paused, shuddering. "Only go," she added faintly.

What did she mean? Did she know what she was saying. Probably not, he decided. What had he said himself a minute ago? He could not remember. What did anything matter now? He went without a word.

The Other Man stared straight in front of him. His face was a mask. For a minute they sat very still. Then he turned round.

"Come," he said in an ordinary voice, "it is time to move."

She gave him her hand, and he helped her over chairs and wooden forms till they were at the back of the building. "Here?" she asked.

"No," he said, and spread his coat on the floor. "Here, please. The nearer the ground, the less smoke, you know."

She sat down silently, and motioned him to share the coat. Then suddenly she laughed.

"It's queer, isn't it," she said, "that we should think about getting our clothes dusty——now?"

He did not answer. He was twisting a button on his overcoat round and round; it came off in his hand. Suddenly he spoke. "You are very brave," he said.

She drew a quivering breath. "I'm trying to be brave enough for two," she said in a low voice.

He made no reply; he did not want to understand.

"I'm glad," she added hurriedly, "that we moved. Perhaps——he will not find us here."

He turned swiftly, with a rush of joy. "Elizabeth!" he cried.

"Then you are content here with me?"

She brushed her hand across her eyes. "Oh, I don't know what I'm saying. I'm angry and distressed and humiliated. I don't want to die; but if I've got to, I'd rather be near somebody brave like——like you.

"Elizabeth," he said passionately, "Don't you know——?"

She started. "Oh, hush!" she murmured. "It is so near——the end."

"That is just why," he said, and laughed recklessly. "In a few minutes it must all be over. Haven't we a right to make the most of them? Do you love me, Elizabeth?" He drew her towards him, and she did not resist. She was thinking shamefacedly of the grayness of her husband's face as she had last seen it. The blood of a dozen generations of pioneers and warriors was surging through her own veins and she scorned impending fate.

"Yes," she said absently, "I believe I do."

"Ah, say it again,' he urged, "'without the 'believe.' "

The smoke was rapidly thickening. She tried not to think of it. "I love my love with a B," she said flippantly, "because he is brave, and I hate my——him with a C, because he is a Coward ——a Coward!"

His arms relaxed suddenly. "Ah, dear don't!" he cried. "Is that all? Is that the reason?"

"All?" she echoed. "Isn't it enough?"

"No," he said bitterly; "I'm a cad but not as bad as all that. Are you blind? Don't you know what was the matter with him?"

"He was afraid," she whispered. "My husband, afraid!"

Neither of them noticed that in front of the blazing stage the fireproof curtain had suddenly finished its arrested descent, and that a semi-lull ensued.

"Yes" he cried with a revulsion of loyalty to his friend, "afraid of losing you. Surely you know what happened to his father and mother? Didn't you even wonder what he meant by "Not again this way?"

She shook her head. "Wives know so little of their husband's bachelor experience," she reminded him with a wan smile.

"They were burnt to death, when he was a boy" he said, "like this, in a theatre. He was with them, the flooring gave way taking them both with it, and leaving him on the broken edge, safe."

She covered her face with her hands. "Oh!" she murmured. I didn't know. What have I done?"

"He told me once," he went on, "that it had left him with the feeling that fire would never touch him, but that to think of anyone he cared for being in a fire made him—well, what you saw."

They were silent for an instant. "Hullo!" he said suddenly, "they've got the curtain down."

The two stood up. Firemen and policemen were everywhere.

"No danger! No danger!"

The words passed from mouth to mouth, and though they were not strictly true, the effect of the lowered curtain was magical. The crowd was preceptibly thinner, noticeably calmer, but round each exit were gruesome proofs of the violence of the panic.

"Elizabeth!"

They looked at each other. "It's John," she said faintly.

"Yes," he said, and his smile was bitter, "It's John. Good-bye. Forget it all, Elizabeth. Do you know"——he looked at his watch——"it's all happened in less than ten minutes?"

"Really?" she said. "It can't be possible." But her eyes were searching for her husband.

The Other Man noticed it. "Elizabeth!" he said, half shamefacedly.

"Yes," she answered, her eyes searching the crowd.

"You are going to make up to him somehow for——for saying that to him?"

Her eyes softened and she held out her hand. "That was nice of you," she said gently. "Yes, I am going to make up to him. I pray God, he will never know what I thought."

"Elizabeth!" He had found her at last. The Other Man slipped away.

"I've found a way," he exclaimed breathlessly. "Come along."

"Oh," she cried, "you've hurt your hand; it's bleeding."

He held out the other to her. "No, no: it's nothing. I had rather a bother with the doors and windows. That's why I've been so long."

She followed him silently.

When they were in their carriage and on their way home there was an awkward silence. Elizabeth had just finished bandaging his hand with the aid of both their handkerchiefs.

"Dear," he said at last, "would you mind telling me why you——you asked me to go away?"

She looked at him a reproachful pout. "Must you inquire into all your wife's weaknesses?" she asked

"I only wondered——"

"Of course," she interrupted, "I knew you would, and I meant to tell you. But you'll despise me. You've got a very unheroic wife, John. When I asked you to go I was——she went on steadily——"I was nearly dead with fright, and I couldn't bear to have you to see it; so I said the first thing I thought of to get rid of you while I got over it; What did I say?——I didn't know what I was saying, John. But——I did get over it."

His face cleared and he bent and kissed her. His voice was very tender. "Elizabeth, my wife——" he said. "Do you know"——he laughed light-heartedly——"I've been worrying like everything about it. I fancied you thought I was in a funk about myself. I—I thought you meant that."

She stared at him, then burst out laughing hysterically and threw her arms round his neck. "Oh, you dear, darling old stupid!" she cried.

"Don't you know yet that women never mean what they seem to mean?"

He made a mock gesture of despair. "So now that you seem to mean you are——well, rather fond of me, Elizabeth, what do you really mean?"

She smiled up at him swiftly. "That I consider you just perfect," she whispered.

Upstairs in their own room, when he had gone down to give some orders to the servants, Elizabeth wandered to the window. Her eyes were troubled Suddenly she knelt down and buried her face in her hands. "God grant," she supplicated, "that he will never know——I do love him. I have always loved him——but that I should have thought him afraid!" Sketch.

"OH!" SHE CRIED, "YOU'VE HURT YOUR HAND; IT'S BLEEDING."

FEAT OF AMATEUR ROBBER.

Met With Entire Success in Separating Man From His Watch.

If a man who was robbed of a gold watch in Chicago, under peculiar conditions which he will recognize from the recital of the adventure by the robber, will communicate with Hobart J. Allen, of Irving Park, Chicago, he can have back his timepiece, along with a profuse apology.

Mr. Allen recently bought a revolver to protect himself from hold-up men who have fleeced several victims in a long subway under the Northwestern Railway tracks. He was kept at his business until quite late one night recently, and starting home he put his pistol in his pocket with a feeling of much satisfaction.

The approach to the subway was dimly lighted by a single lamp. He plunged into the cavern and walked through. A figure dimmed the exit, and as the two men met, the roar of passing trains startled them, and they brushed each other in passing. A moment later Allen felt for his watch. It was not in his pocket. He ran back through the subway and overtook the other man just as he was emerging.

"Hand over that watch or I'll blow your head off!" he shouted. The man leaped over a stone abutment and ran. Allen followed and cornered him against a wall.

"I'll give you another chance," he said, leveling his revolver. The man, apparently too frightened to speak, gave him the watch.

Allen went home and told his wife of his adventure.

"Why, your watch is in there on the dresser; you didn't take it with you," she exclaimed. Now Allen is looking for the man he held up.

Twenty Years a Bigot.

Bacon—That man is always on the wrong side of a question.

Egbert—How do you know?

Bacon—Why, I've known him for twenty years, and in all that time I never knew him to think the same way as I have.

THE WOMAN IN BRONZE.

Striking Figure of a Woman Who Died of a Broken Heart.

A story of unrequited love is mutely told in cold bronze and marble in one of the cemeteries in the city of Washington, D. C.

The story runs that a beautiful young woman, daughter of rich parents, fell in love with a poor and struggling artist. The attraction was mutual, but her family aspired to a wealthy alliance. Finally, filial duty won the day and the girl was led to the altar by a rich suitor. They lived together for some time, and the brilliancy of the match was the talk of

ST. GAUDENS' REALIZATION.

Washington society. The woman's love, however, still went out to the poor artist and her husband, who had been informed of the peculiar state of affairs, could do nothing to win his wife's affection. All the gifts that money could buy were showered upon her, but to no purpose.

To his horror, one day several months after their marriage he found his wife lying dead in a room in their house, the poor girl having died of a broken heart. Although deeply attached to his wife, he was struck with admiration by her devotion to his rival, and when she was buried in the family lot in Rock Creek Cemetery, he commissioned St. Gaudens, the sculptor, to make a bronze statue of heroic size, depicting her as she was found, dead and covered with her bathrobe.

The figure of the woman is seated, with the bathrobe drawn about her, and the work is one of great strength. The bronze is surrounded by marble beautifully carved. In front of it is a long marble seat, where one may admire the work of art. No name marks the spot, but at each corner of the lot is a small marble block, about six inches square, with the letter "A" carved in the top. The entire lot is surrounded by a dense growth of pine trees, so that one not familiar with the spot looks in vain for the figure.

Character of England's King.

The character of King Edward, while Prince of Wales, appears to have been greatly misunderstood. Many scandals were laid at his door; many journalists and prominent writers found themselves unable to resist temptation of making him the theme of extravagant stories without foundation, or at best based only upon hearsay evidence.

While making no pretence to being a saint, his morals were neither better nor worse than the majority of his countrymen and it was precisely that fact that endeared him to them. The great influence that no other Prince possessed, and which was possessed by him in a superlative degree, was very largely due to his remarkable tact.

Thanks more to him than to any other, hard drinking, carousals, coarse and profane language went out of fashion. He would tolerate in the houses of respectable people no men and women who had forfeited their right to remain within their pale, and no woman of questionable antecedents could with his sanction consort with ladies or with innocent girls. Few people had any idea how well read he was. It was generally reported that his reading was very limited, and yet the reverse was true. No new book of importance, whether in German, English or French, appeared that failed to receive his attention, and many such were read and discussed at Marlborough House before their review appeared in print. Not a few of the French authors were accustomed to send him their first copies.

His faults, never grave or serious, simply served to bring out in greater prominence the many attractive points of his character, and since his accession to the throne even those faults have grown less and his virtues and ability become brighter and greater.

From a Diplomat's Diary.

Home from the Philipines.

I've been thinking, since our boy returned to us one morning,
And in spite of all our doubts and fears he stood before our view,
What was written by a friend of his, so cheerily and brightly,
"Not to ever trouble trouble till trouble troubles you."
The lad returned in safety, spite of chills and spite of fever,
Spite of all the many dangers of the land and of the sea,
Spite of anything we dreaded, spite of faith evinced by neither;
Hereafter let no trouble trouble you nor trouble me;
For when the skies are darkest and a threatened storm surrounds us,
Shutting out the glorious sunlight from our nearer sighted view,
Then appears the "silver lining" that on every cloud is shining;
So never trouble trouble till trouble troubles you.
That every back is fitted for the burden that is given
Is a saying trite, if ancient, while it's always proven true,
And if the burden's grievous, the good Lord will arrange it
That the trouble will be gone before the trouble troubles you.
'Tis shown that both our hopes and fears are half anticipation,
For midnight terrors vanish with the early morning dew,
And when the night is darkest the dawn is just a-breaking;
Then don't ever trouble trouble till trouble troubles you.